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SATURDAY
AUGUST 22, 1953

Jean Monnet came to see me at Versailles this morning. He had just returned after spending a few days with Sylvia at the Ile de Re.

He feels as I do, that the present crisis in France is once more symptomatic of the great underlying evil, namely that the Constitution of the Fourth Republi has "institutionalized instability". The difficulty is that, despite the wide acceptance of the necessity for amending the Constitution, political leaders in this country are so habituated to dealing with expedients in the form of party combinations to ameliorate temporarily a distressing malady that they do not recognize how imperative it is to attack the problems and to solve them. If a real statesman were to take the question to the Parliament and the country, in a dramatic fashion, of reforming the institutions under which the executive branch of government so inadequately operates, I have no doubt of the result. A referendum on the subject would show, I believe, overwhelming popular support for bestowing the authority, now almost completely lacking, on the Executive.

Jean does not think the citizens at large are apathetic or unconcerned over the actual sorry situation of France. What he terms an "accident", such as a further declension in orderliness and capacity to handle any such problems as Indo-China, North Africa, fiscal reform and social justice, economic sanity, and European federation, might precipitate an imperative call from the voters for a drastic change in political institutions. But who is to bell the cat — there is the question.

The Chambers lunched with us at Versailles. They had lately been on a cruise in the course of which they made landfall at the Island of Elba, described by them as an earthly Paradise.

Incredible weather for August. Gusty winds, fitful sunshine, April-like showers.

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We had for the Chambers one of my favorite wines, a Chateau Cheval Blanc 1934, in a fine state of preservation. Also a Grand Chablis Les Clos 1947, and an Alfred Grattien Champagne of 1943. Lucien quite surpassed himself with a pyramidal spinach omelette and a spitted Chaslik.

Audrey and I walked in the park.

Tonight it was cool enough for an open fire, in front of which the dogs shivered.

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